



February 21, 2024

HB 135: Transportation - Maryland Transportation Authority - Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Accessibility

East Coast Greenway Alliance – FAVORABLE

As the organization responsible for the establishment of the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail in development from Maine to Florida, including 160 miles in Maryland, the East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) supports the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Bicycle / Pedestrian Safety Bill HB135.

The East Coast Greenway is in development (currently at about 36 percent complete) across 15 states and DC, linking towns and cities as the spine of greenway networks along the coast, and to ensure connectivity across boundaries and rivers, it is critical that high quality, traffic-separated facilities be provided for people walking and biking. Without such connections for people of all ages and abilities, entire regions of Maryland miss out on critical transportation and tourism access for residents and visitors alike for connections to and from major trails in the state, such as the East Coast Greenway, but also the September 11th National Memorial Trail, the American Discovery Trail, and the Great American Rail Trail. In many cases, people will visit the bike and pedestrian crossings as destinations unto themselves, which will also lead to some of those trips generating toll revenue. See the example pictured below along the I-295 Scudder Falls Toll Bridge linking PA and NJ active transportation networks as a recent example.

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Finished in 2022, the I-295 Scudder Falls Toll Bridge was constructed by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission between Ewing, NJ and Lower Makefield, PA. It includes a shared use path over the Delaware River, allowing for people walking, running, and biking to seamlessly connect between the D&R Canal Towpath (NJ) and the D&L Trail (PA).

Maryland hosts an incredible array of cultural, natural, and historic assets located across every region of the state. But often these assets are isolated from each other by natural obstacles, such as the Chesapeake Bay and the Susquehanna River. This is especially challenging for the more than 200,000 households in the state with no access to a vehicle (US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2018-2022). Including multi-use trails across Maryland Transportation Authority facilities in tandem with public transportation systems is key to unlocking opportunities for Marylanders, especially those with the most need. The East Coast Greenway Alliance urges a Favorable HB 135 committee report and House floor vote. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Daniel Paschall, Mid-Atlantic Regional Greenway Manager
East Coast Greenway Alliance

